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Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

In its resolution 58/176 of 22 December 2003, the General Assembly welcomed the activities of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa at Yaoundé and noted with satisfaction the support provided for the establishment of the Centre by the host country. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to provide their full assistance for the proper functioning of the Centre. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

The present report provides an overview of the activities carried by the Centre as a contribution of the efforts by the United Nations to promote human rights and democratic principles and values in the Central African subregion, and the most significant developments since July 2001, the date of the last report to the General Assembly (A/56/36/Add.1).

* This report is delayed in submission to reflect updated information.

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I. Background

1. The United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa was established in 2001 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/55 A of 1 December 1999, at the request of States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The Centre operates under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

2. The Centre is designed to contribute to the enhancement of capacities in the promotion and protection of human rights, and to support the creation and/or strengthening of national institutions. The Centre also strives to contribute to the development of a culture of human rights and democracy in Central Africa for the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of sustainable peace and development.

3. In the fulfilment of its mandate, the Centre provides advice and technical assistance to Governments and civil society, runs programmes and organizes workshops on issues within its mandate. The Centre assists various partners at the national and subregional levels in strengthening capacities in the fields of human rights and democracy. In this regard, the Centre has developed an internship programme for graduate students and human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the Central African subregion.

II. Strengthening of the structure of the Centre

A. Composition of the Centre

4. The Centre became fully operational in March 2001. In June 2002, the High Commissioner for Human Rights officially inaugurated the Centre during a conference of Ministers of Justice and Presidents of Supreme Courts of the region on human rights reporting hosted and organized by the Centre.

5. The Centre has entered its third year of operations. It is composed of three international professionals: the Director, a Regional Democracy Adviser and a Human Rights Officer deployed to Yaoundé in 2002; an additional international Human Rights Officer joined the Centre from March to December 2003 in order to implement the activities financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office in the Republic of the Congo. International staff members are assisted by three local staff, including a documentalist.

6. Support for the Centre's activities is provided through the regular budget of the United Nations. Nevertheless, in 2002, the Centre started the process of raising extrabudgetary resources to augment its projects and activities within the context of the OHCHR annual appeal for funds.

B. Structure of the Centre

7. OHCHR provides full assistance for the proper functioning of the Centre in the fulfilment of its mandates. Furthermore, the Centre has been requested to represent the Office at several major events. Since April 2003, the Centre assisted the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, established to pursue peaceful ways of

implementing the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the land and maritime dispute between the two countries, during its sessions held in Yaoundé.

8. In addition, the Director of the Centre represented the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the *Conférence des structures gouvernementales chargées des droits de l'homme dans l'espace francophone* (Conference of governmental human rights structures in the Francophone area) held in Brazzaville in April 2003, organized by the International Organization of la Francophonie. This conference was an opportunity for the Centre to draw the attention of the participants to the responsibility of States to assume their international human rights obligations. The conference enabled the establishment of a network of governmental structures on human rights in the Francophone area.

9. At the request of OHCHR, the Centre contributed to the organization of two seminars. A seminar for Pygmy communities was held in Yaoundé and Sangmelima Mekas, Cameroon, from 13 to 15 November 2002. A follow-up to the seminar was held, with the theme "Minorities and indigenous people's rights", in Cameroon from 25 to 28 November 2003, in the framework of the human rights education programme. Participants came from civil society, pygmy communities and indigenous people's groups in Cameroon. Furthermore, the Centre, in collaboration with the OHCHR Anti-Discrimination Unit in Geneva, organized a seminar on the role of civil society in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action from 12 to 14 July 2004, in Yaoundé.

10. Within the framework of the OHCHR-UNDP Assisting Communities Together (ACT) project, the Centre awarded bursaries of US$ 5,000 each to three Cameroonian NGOs working in the field of human rights and peace advocacy. They are: Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association which operates in the Northwest Province of Cameroon, the Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy based in Bamenda, Cameroon, and the Union nationale des associations et institutions pour personnes handicapées du Cameroun, based in Yaoundé.

C. Strengthening of the Documentation Unit

11. The Documentation Unit was set up in November 2001. It publishes and distributes the Centre's quarterly newsletter, *Bulletin des droits de l'homme et de la démocratie*. Thus far 12 issues have been published. The Centre also issues several other publications, including periodic reports, quarterly bulletins and training materials.

12. The Documentation Unit provides services to more than 1,500 visitors per year. It is used mainly by the media, university students and researchers, and the general public in the subregion and beyond. The Documentation Unit also ensures dissemination and distribution of relevant human rights materials from OHCHR and other reliable sources in the region. In view of the growing public demand to access documentation resources, the Centre has initiated a human rights database and started developing country profiles in the field of human rights and democracy in Central Africa. Peacekeeping missions and other United Nations entities are benefiting from the expertise of the Documentation Unit. For example, in the context of the collaboration with the United Nations Peace-Building Office in Bangui (BONUCA), a Human Rights Assistant was sent by the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General to the Centre to undertake training on documentation techniques.

13. The Centre launched its web site in June 2002 (www.un.cm/rights) and it is now fully operational. A sensitization project using videos on human rights and democracy issues was set up in June 2003.

14. The Documentation Unit has developed partnerships with different African and international institutions such as the Danish Centre for Human Rights and the International Institute for Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, to facilitate information-sharing and capacity development. In this regard, the Centre was given and made use of fellowships for human rights documentation. The Documentation Unit has also benefited from the publications offered by the International Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims.

III. Partners

A. Collaboration with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African Union (AU)

15. In accordance with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in July 2002 between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Secretary-General of ECCAS, the Centre provides advice and technical assistance to the ECCAS secretariat with a view to strengthening its analytical capacities and enhancing the operation of the Mécanisme d'alerte rapide d'Afrique central, MARAC (Central African Early Warning Mechanism). The objective of MARAC is to enhance regional capacity for conflict prevention. At the invitation of ECCAS, in 2003, the Centre participated in the preparatory mission to Pretoria to identify technical requirements for the establishment of MARAC and the development of the ECCAS web site.

16. In line with the 2002 MOU, and at the invitation of the Secretary-General of ECCAS, the Centre represented OHCHR at the eleventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS held on 26 and 27 January 2004 in Brazzaville. The Centre continues to involve the ECCAS secretariat in all its subregional activities. Through its civil society capacity-building project, the Centre has contributed to the emerging partnership of ECCAS with civil society organizations in the subregion.

17. During the Summit, cooperation between ECCAS and the United Nations was reviewed. The participants called for a stronger United Nations presence in the subregion. This dialogue continued during the twenty-first regular meeting of the United Nations Standing Committee on Peace and Security in Central Africa, held in Malabo, from 21 to 25 June 2004. Although the Centre did not participate, that forum, which is organized by the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs, remains a useful tool for consultations on matters related to peace and security in the subregion.

18. The Centre participated in the Summits of the African Union in Mozambique and Addis Ababa in 2003 and 2004. During these summits, useful interaction took place with members of the Standing Committee. The final communiqués and declarations of the Summits drew attention to and welcomed the positive

developments in, among other things, the activities in the region of the United Nations in general and the Centre in particular.

B. Collaboration with United Nations agencies

19. The Centre has built strong partnerships with United Nations agencies in Cameroon and in the subregion, including the Economic Commission for Africa-Central Africa.

20. The Centre is greatly involved in the work of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Cameroon. It has used this opportunity to highlight issues of human rights mainstreaming. As a result of the fruitful interaction with United Nations agencies represented in Cameroon, human rights focal points have now been designated within the country offices of the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Children's Fund, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, International Labour Organization, United Nations Population Fund, Economic Commission for Africa-Central Africa, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Continuous exchanges of experience are now taking place between and among these focal points.

21. A joint United Nations-African Union team led by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, visited the Centre in April 2003 and exchanged views on how the Centre can assist the Special Representative and the Special Envoy of the African Union in the preparations for the International Conference on the Great Lakes region. As a follow-up to this meeting, the Centre took part in a policy forum on peace, security and governance in the Great Lakes region, organized by the International Peace Academy. The Centre also facilitated the organization of a workshop on the integration of human rights in the process of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region, held in Yaoundé from 17 to 19 May 2004.

22. The preparation of the Subregional seminar on civilian-military cooperation during democratic transitions, organized with the collaboration of UNCT, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Burundi and OHCHR, took place in Bujumbura from 6 to 8 September 2004. Other key stakeholders represented at the workshop were the Secretariat General of ECCAS, BONUCA, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) and the OHCHR New York Office and the Centre.

IV. Activities carried out from July 2001 to July 2004

A. Human rights activities

1. Training

Training financed under the regular budget

23. In accordance with the activities foreseen as described in the previous report (A/56/36/Add.1), the Centre organized the following subregional training programmes:

(a) A Workshop on the development of national plans of action related to human rights in Central Africa from 18 to 19 December 2001 in Yaoundé. Follow-up was done with the Comité national des droits de l'homme et des libertés (National Commission on Human Rights and Liberties) of Cameroon as well as with the new Commission des droits de l'homme du Congo (Commission on Human Rights of the Congo) on the development of national plans of action related to human rights in the framework of Human Rights Day 2003;

(b) During the official inauguration of the Centre by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, a subregional conference on human rights reporting for Ministers of Justice and Human Rights and the Presidents of Supreme Courts of Central Africa took place in Yaoundé on 13 and 14 June 2002. In follow-up to the conference, some countries have submitted reports to the treaty monitoring bodies as well as ratified outstanding conventions. A follow-up workshop was also organized by the Centre for the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Cameroon on 22 July 2004, on "Reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)";

(c) In collaboration with UNDP-Congo, a training programme on reporting to treaty bodies, national plans of action for human rights and human rights mechanisms was held in Brazzaville from 16 to 20 December 2002, with participants from the civil service and NGOs. Participants at the programme called on the Government to establish national commissions of human rights and to ratify all major treaties related to human rights. The Commission was set up in September 2003;

(d) A workshop on military justice in Central Africa was organized from 13 to 15 January 2003 in Libreville for 22 military judges and prosecutors from States members of ECCAS. At the end of the workshop, participants adopted the Libreville Declaration in which inter alia, they called on the Governments that had not done so to ratify various international and regional human rights instruments and to include their provisions in national legislation;

(e) In collaboration with the UNESCO subregional office in Central Africa and with the contribution of other partners such as UNDP-Brazzaville and USAID, the Centre organized a workshop on "Media, human rights and democracy in Central Africa" in Malabo from 20 to 22 May 2003 for 25 private and public media professionals. The aim was to sensitize leading media personalities to enable them to advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights in the subregion. Participants were drawn from all 11 ECCAS countries. At the end of the workshop, participants adopted a common code of conduct for media in Central Africa. In follow-up to this effort, the Centre is publishing reference documents for media in Central Africa.

Training financed through the voluntary contributions

24. Partnerships with local and subregional NGOs were established. In June 2003, within the framework of the joint OHCHR-UNDP project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the civil society in the Republic of the Congo, the Centre provided training to 300 members of NGOs in Brazzaville. The project was on capacity-building for civil society in the Congo. One hundred and fifty senior students from the Marien Nguabi University and 150 NGO members participated. The outcome was a quantifiable improvement in the knowledge of participants with regard to

human rights promotion and protection. Furthermore, in the context of the agreement signed in 2002 between OHCHR and the Government of France, the Centre launched a project whose purpose was to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations from 2002 to 2005 in Central Africa in the field of human rights and democracy. The project has been implemented by the Centre since July 2002 and will continue until November 2005. Many activities, such as organization of seminars, follow-up on recommendations and declarations adopted during past seminars, enrichment of the Documentation Unit's material, allocation of additional funds for the Centre's internship programme and grants to research institutions and NGO coalitions have been implemented. In the framework of this project, the following seminars were implemented:

(a) A workshop on the role of the civil society in the promotion and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups took place in N'Djamena from 22 to 24 July 2003. Some 45 representatives of civil society organizations involved in the promotion and protection of the rights of women, children, minorities, refugees and the handicapped participated. A plan of action was drawn up and the N'Djamena Declaration adopted;

(b) A seminar on lobbying techniques for civil society in Central Africa took place in Libreville from 1 to 3 December 2003. The seminar was aimed at strengthening the skills of civil society leaders in advocating, campaigning and lobbying for human rights. Forty-five NGO leaders, civil servants and trade union leaders from 10 countries participated. A plan of action and a declaration were adopted and a follow-up committee to monitor the implementation of the outcome of the meeting was set up;

(c) A workshop on civil society, human rights and the rule of law was organized from 2 to 4 February 2004, in Kribi, Cameroon, for 32 participants representing Governments, national institutions, military judges and civil society organizations. A strong delegation from ECCAS as well as United Nations agencies including ILO, UNDP and UNAIDS also took an active part in the meeting. The objective of the seminar was to sensitize participants on the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and on the indissoluble links between the promotion and protection of human rights on the one hand, and the consolidation of the rule of law, on the other. The workshop also provided an occasion to emphasize the central role of the judiciary in upholding respect of human rights and the rule of law. A biennial plan of action, a code of conduct for civil society, and strategies aimed at increasing the free and full participation of citizens in the political process were adopted;

(d) A workshop on women's rights and national legislation in Central Africa was organized in Kigali, from 17 to 19 March 2004 in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women for 44 participants. The seminar provided a forum for an exchange of views on national experiences on this issue and best practices to encourage Governments to incorporate the provisions of the international instruments pertaining to the rights of women in their national legislation. The Kigali Declaration and Plan of Action were adopted, as well as various recommendations aiming at encouraging national Governments to ensure the full equality of men and women. A follow-up committee was also set up with a view to ensuring the implementation of the Kigali recommendations;

(e) The Centre organized another training seminar in Brazzaville, on 29 and 30 March 2004, on women journalists, human rights and the rule of law for 22 participants. A follow-up to the Malabo seminar of May 2003 on media, human rights and democracy in Central Africa, the Brazzaville seminar aimed at providing assistance to women journalists interested in learning ways and means of integrating issues relating to human rights and democracy in their work, to ensure better coverage of human rights issues and to make reference to international and regional human rights instruments so as to contribute to the promotion of human rights in the subregion. At the end of their deliberations, participants set up a subregional network of women journalists interested in human rights issues. National focal points were designated, and a subregional provisional unit was created to ensure coordination of focal points. Participants also adopted a draft code of conduct for women journalists as well as various strategies to enhance their work in the promotion of human rights in the subregion;

(f) A training seminar on the role of civil society in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was organized in Yaoundé from 12 to 14 July 2004. Thirty-nine participants attended the seminar. The seminar aimed at sensitizing participants on the dangers that all practices of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance represent for peace and on the urgent need for an implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. At the end of the seminar, participants adopted core documents such as the Declaration of Yaoundé on the role of civil society in the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, a strategy and subregional plan of action, and a plan of action of the Central African youth relating to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Participants set up a follow-up committee chaired by Cameroon and composed of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Gabon.

2. Advisory services and technical cooperation

25. The Centre continues to provide technical cooperation to Governments, non-governmental organizations and national institutions, upon request. Already established national human rights institutions have benefited from this assistance, for example, in Cameroon. Those in the process of being formally established, such as those in the Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea, have also requested the assistance of the Centre.

26. Many technical cooperation projects have been implemented that were targeted at NGOs and national institutions through collaboration between the Centre and the UNDP offices in the subregion. In March 2003, the Centre implemented two training sessions for the members of the Legal Aid Chair set up by the UNDP Justice and Human Rights Project. Forty-four members of the Legal Aid Chair attended the sessions and were sensitized to the mandate of OHCHR, the mandate of the Centre and its activities, as well as to the conventional and extraconventional mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights.

27. Furthermore, a two-day working session was held in 2004 at the Centre in Yaoundé with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Equatorial Guinea on the design of projects for a human rights training project to be implemented during the years 2004-2006. This programme was intended for several groups of Equatorial Guinean society (women, journalists, armed forces, parliamentarians, prison

administrators, etc.). It will be implemented by the Centre and funded by UNDP-Equatorial Guinea.

3. Internship programme

28. The Centre runs a three-month internship programme for graduate students, human rights activists and representatives of Governments, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations involved in the promotion of human rights and the rule of law in the subregion. The internship programme commenced at the end of 2001.

29. Twelve interns from Cameroon, the Congo, Gabon, Rwanda and Chad were trained in 2001 and 2002. During the period from 2003 to 2004, 24 interns from Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe, and a staff member of BONUCA, were trained.

4. Support to human rights research and training institutions

30. Within the framework of the joint OHCHR-UNDP-Brazzaville project, the Centre provided training to 150 lecturers and students of the Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville in June 2003.

31. Furthermore, two institutions of higher education in human rights, namely the Association pour la promotion des droits de l'homme en Afrique centrale (Association for the Promotion of Human Rights in Central Africa), based in Yaoundé, and the Marien Ngouabi University Law School have been selected as beneficiaries of a US$ 3,000 allowance aimed at supporting the teaching of human rights instruments and issues. These funds have been provided under the partnership between OHCHR and the Government of France.

5. Human rights education

32. In the framework of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, a sensitization project, entitled "Human rights progress and challenges", has been set up. The project is based on the showing of videotapes on human rights and democracy issues, introduction to Internet research and debates, and was officially launched in October 2003. From October to December, the Centre implemented programmes on the following themes:

- Human rights: progress and challenges, 21-24 October 2003;
- Minorities and indigenous peoples' rights, 25-28 November 2003;
- Democracy in Central Africa, 11-12 December 2003.

The programme targets several groups including students, researchers, the military, parliamentarians, civil society organization leaders and lawyers.

33. In 2003, the Centre started a pilot project in Cameroon to assist the establishment of human rights clubs in high schools, with the first club inaugurated at the Lycée Tsinga in Yaoundé. This experience is intended to be replicated in the subregion with a view to enhancing the development of a culture of human rights and democracy in school environments.

B. Activities related to democracy

1. General aspects

34. The democracy programme of the Centre became operational with the arrival of the Regional Democracy Adviser in November 2002. The democracy programme focuses mainly on the promotion and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law as a tool for conflict prevention in Central Africa.

35. The Centre has established partnerships with universities, research institutions and civil society organizations in Central Africa and is working closely with the ECCAS secretariat as well as the United Nations entities in the subregion. Extra-African institutions such as the National Endowment for Democracy, based in Washington, D.C., the consortium of civil society organizations grouped together in the Africa Democracy Forum, the International Peace Academy based in New York, the Centre for Policy Studies based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Electoral Institute of South Africa have started collaborating with the Centre.

2. Conflict prevention

36. The Centre continues to assist ECCAS in the drafting of technical papers on the ECCAS early warning and conflict prevention mechanism and regional political integration. It also provided technical assistance to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in the preparation and conduct of subregional training on small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, held in Yaoundé in September 2003.

37. In June 2003, the International Peace Academy and the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, based in the United Republic of Tanzania, requested the Centre's cooperation in the preparation and organization of a seminar on peace building in the Great Lakes region. The seminar on peace, security and governance in the Great Lakes region, jointly organized by the International Peace Academy and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region in Kenya, in partnership with the African Dialogue Centre for Conflict Management and Development Issues (United Republic of Tanzania), the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, the Yaoundé Centre, and the Centre for Conflict Resolution (South Africa), took place in Dar es Salaam, from 15 to 17 December 2003. The meeting involved 60 diplomats, high-ranking military officers, academics and civil society actors, drawn largely from the Great Lakes region, and was the fourth in a series of seminars to address ways in which Africa's subregional organizations could increase their capacity to manage local conflicts. The seminar emerged out of the partnership of IPA with the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations engaged in enhancing their capacities for conflict management and strengthening Africa's security mechanisms.

38. The participants developed a number of policy recommendations to outline the way forward for civil society organizations, Governments, regional institutions and international bodies in addressing the peace and security issues of the Great Lakes region. Specifically, participants emphasized the need to ensure that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region succeeds in addressing the root causes of the conflict in the Great Lakes from regional and domestic perspectives; include civil society and women's groups in peace-building processes; and stem spillover effects from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

3. Election issues

General aspects

39. The Centre assisted ECCAS in the design of a technical framework necessary for voter education, monitoring of elections, and in preparations for the creation of a regional network of parliamentarians. A number of projects of common interest have also been identified, notably in the field of community reintegration and the launching of the regional network of parliamentarians.

40. At the invitation of the Chairman of the Commission of the African Union, the Centre provided expert support on the occasion of the African Union/Eminent Persons brainstorming session on building an African Union for the 21st century, held in Addis Ababa in October 2003.

41. At the national level, two-day consultations were organized in Yaoundé in June 2002 with the National Elections Observatory of Cameroon in collaboration with the United Nations Resident Coordinator. In the Central African Republic, the Centre assisted BONUCA during the holding of its national dialogue. In this regard, consultations were organized between the Centre and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in January 2003.

42. The Centre took part in the fourth meeting of the Africa Democracy Forum held in Durban, South Africa, in April 2003. Representing the Centre, the Regional Democracy Adviser attended the workshop for Central Africa's civil society organizations. He gave a presentation on the Centre and its activities in the field of human rights and the rule of law. Several civil society organizations from the subregion expressed their interest in working with the Centre. There was also a positive exchange of views on possible cooperation and funding with senior officials of the National Endowment for Democracy, which serves as the secretariat of the Africa Democracy Forum, and with other potential donors and partners.

Promotion of democracy and national elections: example of Cameroon

43. The Centre worked closely with the NGO Youth International Movement for Africa, based in Yaoundé, which prepared a training manual for education in electoral processes. The NGO requested the Centre's technical assistance in November 2003 for the preparation of the questionnaire and the finalization of the brochure on elections.

44. At the request of the Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, which is based in Bamenda, Cameroon, the Centre conducted on 19 and 20 April 2004 a training workshop on the rights-based approach to lobbying and advocacy on human rights and democracy issues. Thirty-four participants representing human rights NGOs and media organizations in the Bamenda area took part in the training. The workshop held plenary sessions and working groups. Each working group was assigned a human rights problem to be addressed by using the material provided by the trainer. Evaluating the workshop, participants expressed appreciation for the content and methodology of the two-day programme and requested the Centre to organize similar training in the Northwest Province. Special requests were also made to the Centre to disseminate widely information and documentation on human rights instruments and to include members of the armed forces in future seminars in Northwestern Province.

45. Furthermore, at the request of the Jeunesse volontaire des Nations Unies pour les droits de l'homme (United Nations Youth Volunteers for Human Rights), the Centre conducted a training workshop in Yaoundé on 10 and 11 June 2004 on the rights-based approach. The workshop was organized in five modules: international human rights instruments pertaining to democracy and the rule of law; the relationship between human rights and democracy; democracy, human rights and the culture of peace; the right to democracy; United Nations indicators of a free, fair and credible election; electoral observation; and mediation of post-electoral conflicts.

V. Conclusion

46. The existence of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa has contributed to the increased recognition of the need to uphold and promote human rights and democratic principles by various stakeholders of the subregion. Networks of civil society organizations and media professionals have been set up with a view to promoting human rights and the rule of law.

47. Taking into account the increasing number of requests for technical assistance submitted to the Centre, the strengthening of the structure of the Centre and the allocation of additional funds should be envisaged to enable it to respond positively and effectively.